

# Recovery is Possible!

- Contact a Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault Program
- Get more information
- Find counseling
- Improve your safety
- Talk to a doctor or nurse
- Seek legal assistance
- Talk with friends or family
- Seek a support group
- Practice self-care
- Realize you are not alone or to blame
- Forgive yourself
- Meditate or pray
- Express emotions through art, writing or music
- Be kind to yourself

**If you are in danger now: Call 911**

If you need help getting away from an abusive situation or to heal from past abuse, call a *Helpline*:

**Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence**

1-800-MD-HELPS (352-4574)  
[www.mnadv.org](http://www.mnadv.org)

**Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault**

1-800-983-RAPE (7273)  
[www.mcasa.org](http://www.mcasa.org)

**RAINN | Rape, Abuse & Incest Network**

1-800-656-HOPE (4673) | 24/7 Hotline  
[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

**National Domestic Violence Hotline**

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
[www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

**Maryland Health Care Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

1211 Cathedral Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-539-0872  
[dvcoalition@medchi.org](mailto:dvcoalition@medchi.org)

[www.healthymaryland.org/domestic-violence.php](http://www.healthymaryland.org/domestic-violence.php)

Printed materials funded by a grant from the  
Herbert Bearman Foundation  
Artwork by: Cheryl Hinton Hooks, MFA

*If you have ever  
been abused. . .*



## A Healing Guide for Survivors of Physical, Sexual, and Emotional Abuse



Maryland Health Care Coalition  
Against Domestic Violence

## Effects of Recent or Past Abuse May Affect Your Health

If you have been physically, sexually, emotionally, or verbally abused, or if you witnessed trauma as a child, you may suffer from mental and/or physical pain or symptoms, even years later.

What's worse, you may feel that you are responsible for the abuse or blame yourself for not being able to prevent it. Abuse doesn't have to be recent to hurt you. Sometimes you may not even remember the abuse because you may have been too young or have blocked the memory.

*The first step to recovery is understanding the problem.*

*Help is available!*

## If you have been:

- Hurt, hit, pushed, burned, kicked, bitten, or strangled
- Forced to engage in sexual activity without your consent or before you were old enough to consent
- Hurt or threatened by your loved ones if you told about the abuse
- Made to feel bad, guilty, or worthless

*You are not alone!*

---

**22% of adults, female and male, report being sexually abused as a child.**

*(Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, 1998)*

**Adverse childhood experiences have a profound effect on adult health.**

*(CDC, Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, 2003)*

**Nearly one in four women in the U.S. reports experiencing violence by a current or former spouse or boyfriend at some point in her life.**

*(CDC, 2008)*

## Possible Effects of Abuse

### Health Problems

- Headaches
- Problems with digestion
- Sleep disorders
- Eating disorders
- Breathing problems/asthma
- Muscle pain/body aches
- Heart disease/high blood pressure
- Substance abuse
- STDs/HIV/AIDS
- Gynecological problems
- Unwanted pregnancy

### Emotional Problems

- Low self-esteem
- Feelings of guilt
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Suicide Attempts
- Fear
- Isolation
- Disassociation

